

1. International Criminal Court

What is ICC?

- The ICC was established under a 1998 treaty called the “**Rome Statute**”.
- Its headquarter is situated in **The Hague, Netherlands.**

What is ICC?

- The International Criminal Court (ICC) investigates and, where warranted, **tries individuals** charged with the gravest crimes of concern to the international community: **genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression.**

What is ICC?

- **ICC's jurisdiction and prosecutions:**
 - Unlike the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)**, which deals with **countries and inter-state disputes**, the **ICC prosecutes individuals**.
 - Additionally, the offences should be **committed either in a country that ratified the agreement** or by a national of a ratifying country.

What is ICC?

- ICC is the world's **first permanent international criminal court.**
- The ICC can also practice its jurisdiction over **cases referred by the UN Security Council** to it.

What is ICC?

- Presently, 123 countries are party to the Rome Statute, including Britain, Japan, Afghanistan, and Germany.
- **Russia, India, the USA and China have abstained from membership.**

ICC vs ICJ

- Unlike the International Court of Justice, **the ICC is not a component of the United Nations framework.**
- The cooperation between the UN and the ICC is controlled by a separate agreement.
- **The ICJ is one of the UN's six main organs.**
- It primarily considers litigation involving countries.
- It was **founded in 1945** and is headquartered in **The Hague** (Netherlands).

Rome Statute

- Before the ICC became **functional in 2002**, its founding treaty was adopted by the **UN General Assembly in 1998 in Rome, Italy**, thereby making it the Rome Statute.
- To become a member of the ICC or State party to the Rome Statute, countries have to **sign the statute and ratify it** under their respective legislatures
- **123 countries are currently members of the ICC**, with African countries making up the largest bloc.
- **India, China, Iraq, North Korea and Turkey never signed the Rome Statute.**
- Others including the **US, Russia, Israel and Syria signed, but never ratified it.**

How Does ICC Function?

- The court carries out its investigations through the **Office of the Prosecutor and has 18 judges.**
- Both the **judges and prosecutors hold non-renewable nine-year terms.**
- There are **pre-trial, trial, and appellate benches in the ICC.**
- The prosecutor **conducts a preliminary examination** in a matter, before seeking permission from **pre-trial judges** to open a full investigation.

Present Prosecutor of International Criminal Court

- As of March 2025, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) is **Karim Ahmad Khan**.
- A British lawyer specializing in international criminal and human rights law, Khan assumed office on June 16, 2021, succeeding Fatou Bensouda.

Present Prosecutor of International Criminal Court

- During his tenure, Khan has been involved in several high-profile investigations and actions:
- **Arrest Warrants for Israeli Leaders:** In November 2024, the ICC issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, charging them with war crimes and crimes against humanity related to military actions in Gaza.
- **Sanctions by the United States:** In February 2025, the U.S. government imposed economic and travel sanctions on Khan in response to the ICC's investigations involving U.S. citizens and allies.

How Does The Prosecutor Open Investigation?

- When a case is **referred by a member country** in its own territory
- When a case is **referred by the UN Security Council**.
- When the prosecutor takes up a case on his own.

Can Non Member States Be Prosecuted?

- If alleged crimes were **perpetrated by non-members** in member states.
- If the **non-members accept the court's jurisdiction**.
- When the **Security Council** authorises it.

Criticism of ICC

1. Some experts question whether the **time, efforts and financial resources invested** in the court by member countries is worth the outcome.
2. After 23 years of being active, the **court has convicted 10 persons** accused in a small number of **cases and acquitted four individuals**
3. Criticisms also hint at the fact that the **court may be shying away** from taking on western powers like the United States.
4. Court, since its formation, largely **took up investigations** into alleged crimes committed in African countries.
5. The African Union in 2016 had **endorsed a proposal** led by Kenya for a mass **withdrawal from the Rome Statute**.

Why Was International Criminal Court in News in 2025

Arrest of Former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte

- On March 11, 2025, former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte was arrested at Manila's international airport upon returning from Hong Kong.
- The ICC had issued an arrest warrant accusing him of crimes against humanity related to his aggressive anti-drug campaign during his presidency (2016–2022), which allegedly led to thousands of extrajudicial killings.
- Duterte was subsequently transferred to The Hague to face trial.

Arrest Warrants for Israeli Leaders

- In November 2024, the ICC issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant.
- They were charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity, including the use of starvation as a method of warfare and attacks against civilians during the Israel-Hamas conflict.
- These warrants led to international debates, with some countries affirming their commitment to uphold the ICC's decisions, while others, including the United States, criticized the court's actions

USA Sanctions Against ICC

- In response to the arrest warrants against Israeli officials, U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order in early February 2025, imposing sanctions on ICC officials involved in investigations targeting the U.S. and its allies, notably Israel.
- These sanctions included financial penalties and travel bans, reflecting longstanding U.S. opposition to the ICC's jurisdiction over non-member states.

Investigations Against Taliban Leaders

- On January 23, 2025, the ICC's Chief Prosecutor announced applications for arrest warrants against Taliban Supreme Leader Haibatullah Akhundzada and Chief Justice Abdul Hakim Haqqani.
- They were accused of crimes against humanity, particularly the oppression and persecution of Afghan women and girls since the Taliban's return to power in 2021.

Investigations Against Taliban Leaders

- In early 2025, Italian authorities arrested Osama Elmasry Njeem, a Libyan military officer wanted by the ICC for war crimes, including murder, torture, and rape.
- However, due to procedural issues, Italy released Njeem, allowing him to return to Libya.
- This decision prompted the ICC to investigate Italy's actions, considering potential referrals to the court's governing body or the United Nations Security Council.

USA on ICC

- The United States is considering imposing sanctions as soon as this week against the entire International Criminal Court, putting the court's day-to-day operations in jeopardy in retaliation for investigations of suspected Israeli war crimes.
- Washington has already imposed targeted sanctions on several prosecutors and judges at the court, but naming the court itself in the sanctions list would be a major escalation.

Withdrawal from ICC

- In **September 2025**, *Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso* — all ruled by military governments — jointly announced they are **exiting the International Criminal Court**, branding it a tool of “neocolonial repression.
- These countries are part of the *Alliance of Sahel States*, a bloc that has also pulled out of regional organisations. Their decision undermines ICC jurisdiction in those territories and signals worsening cooperation with global justice mechanisms.

Withdrawal from ICC

- On **December 11, 2025**, *Venezuela's National Assembly voted to repeal the law that had ratified the ICC's founding *Rome Statute*, opening the formal process for withdrawal.
- This step follows ICC scrutiny of alleged abuses in Venezuela and rhetoric from the government calling the court an “instrument of imperialism.”

Withdrawal from ICC

- Hungary *announced its intention* to pull out of the ICC in **April-May 2025**, with its parliament ratifying the withdrawal decision.
- Under the Rome Statute's rules, withdrawal becomes legally effective **one year after notification to the United Nations Secretary-General**, meaning Hungary will *officially leave* likely in **April 2026**.
- Hungary would be the *only European Union member state* to leave the ICC, which has drawn criticism within the EU and from rights groups.

Withdrawal from ICC

- Some sources indicate that **the Taliban government declared a withdrawal** from the ICC in 2025, claiming to nullify Afghanistan's past accession.
- However, because the ICC membership is governed by the *Rome Statute* and recognized governments, this move is **legally disputed internationally** and not universally accepted as ending ICC obligations.

Addition to ICC

Ukraine Became ICC Member (January 2025)

- Ukraine officially became the **125th State Party to the Rome Statute as of early 2025**, strengthening cooperation with the ICC in investigations linked to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

2. NATO

- **Basic Facts**
- The 2025 NATO Summit was a meeting of heads of state and government of the 32 members of NATO, their partner countries, and the European Union, held in The Hague, Netherlands on 24–25 June 2025. It was the first NATO summit ever hosted by the Netherlands, and marked the inaugural summit for new NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte – a former Prime Minister of the Netherlands and a native of The Hague.
- The summit brought together 45 heads of state, foreign affairs ministers, and defense ministers, along with 6,000 delegates.

NATO

- Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine added urgency to longer-standing NATO efforts to increase allies' defense spending. Prior to the summit, Secretary General Rutte called for a "quantum leap" in NATO's defense capabilities in response to the security threat posed by Russia, which he warned could be ready to use military force against NATO within five years.
- The summit's agenda was deliberately streamlined — focused almost entirely on defense spending and alliance unity — to avoid any public disagreements, particularly given the unpredictable US stance under President Trump.

HIGHLIGHT 1 – The Historic 5% GDP Defence Spending Pledge

- Allies committed to invest 5% of GDP annually on core defence requirements as well as defence- and security-related spending by 2035.
- This is divided into two components: at least 3.5% of GDP for core defence requirements and NATO Capability Targets, and up to 1.5% of GDP for protecting critical infrastructure, defending networks, ensuring civil preparedness and resilience, innovation, and strengthening the defence industrial base. Allies agreed to submit annual plans showing a credible, incremental path to reach this goal, and the trajectory will be reviewed in 2029.
- This marks a major uplift from the previous benchmark of 2% of GDP adopted at the 2014 Wales Summit. NATO estimates that 23 allies met the 2% benchmark in 2024, compared with just 3 in 2014.

NATO

- Australia, South Korea, New Zealand, and Japan were invited to the summit as Indo-Pacific partners. However, only New Zealand's Prime Minister and Japan's senior-level delegation attended – the heads of government of Australia and South Korea did not participate.
- NATO Secretary General Rutte held talks with the Japanese delegation and New Zealand PM on the sidelines, discussing regional security in East Asia and the global implications of the Ukraine war. The summit underscored NATO's intent to form a broader network of democracies beyond the North Atlantic, with cyber defence collaboration and maritime surveillance identified as key areas for future cooperation with Indo-Pacific partners.

Theme	Key Outcome
Defence Spending	New 5% GDP pledge by 2035 (3.5% core + 1.5% security)
Previous Target	2% GDP since Wales Summit 2014
Article 5	Reaffirmed; Trump committed to collective defence
Ukraine	EUR 35 bn+ aid committed; membership NOT discussed
Russia	Identified as principal long-term threat
Defence Industry	New Defence Production Action Plan launched
Indo-Pacific	Engagement with Japan, New Zealand; AP4 partially attended
Dissenter	Spain rejected the 5% target
Host	Netherlands (first time); Venue: World Forum, The Hague
Secretary General	Mark Rutte (first summit as SG)
Next Summit	Turkey (2026), then Albania

NATO Countries

ALBANIA (2009)	GREECE (1952)	POLAND (1999)
BELGIUM (1949)	HUNGARY (1999)	PORTUGAL (1949)
BULGARIA (2004)	ICELAND (1949)	ROMANIA (2004)
CANADA (1949)	ITALY (1949)	SLOVAKIA (2004)
CROATIA (2009)	LATVIA (2004)	SLOVENIA (2004)
CZECHIA (1999)	LITHUANIA (2004)	SPAIN (1982)
DENMARK (1949)	LUXEMBOURG (1949)	TÜRKIYE (1952)
ESTONIA (2004)	MONTENEGRO (2017)	UNITED KINGDOM (1949)
FINLAND (2023)	NETHERLANDS (1949)	UNITED STATES (1949)
FRANCE (1949)	NORTH MACEDONIA (2020)	
GERMANY (1955)	NORWAY (1949)	

Nato Atlantic Council

Highest decision-making body

- Comprises representatives (usually Ambassadors) of all **31 member countries**.
- Meets weekly at ambassadorial level and periodically at ministerial and summit levels.
- **Decisions are made by consensus**, meaning all members must agree.

Secretary General

The **chief administrative officer and spokesperson** of NATO.

- Appointed by member states for a 4-year term (renewable).
- Chairs the North Atlantic Council and other major committees.
- Coordinates the implementation of decisions and diplomatic engagement.

Military Committee (MC)

The **senior military authority** of NATO-

- Provides military advice to the North Atlantic Council.
- Composed of the Chiefs of Defence (CHODs) of all member countries.
- Supported by the **International Military Staff (IMS)**, a body of military experts.

NATO's Strategic Command

1. Allied Command Operations (ACO)

1. Headquartered at **Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE)** in Mons, Belgium.
2. Responsible for the **planning and execution of all NATO military operations** worldwide.
3. Headed by the **Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR)** – traditionally a U.S. general.

2. Allied Command Transformation (ACT)

1. Headquartered in **Norfolk, Virginia, USA**.
2. Focuses on **modernization, training, and development of NATO's military capabilities**.
3. Headed by the **Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT)** – usually a European officer.

International Staff

- Supports the Secretary General.
- Provides policy advice, coordination, and administrative support for all NATO activities.

Funding Structure

Funded through three main budgets:

- 1. Civil Budget** – administrative costs, paid by all members.
- 2. Military Budget** – operational and command expenses.
- 3. NATO Security Investment Programme (NSIP)** – infrastructure and communication systems.

SG of NATO

- The Secretary General of NATO is appointed through a consensus-based process involving informal diplomatic consultations among the 32 member countries, who put forward senior political figures for the role.
- There is no formal election process; instead, allies must agree on one candidate through a consensus that is often reached through back-channel discussions.
- The chosen candidate is then appointed by the North Atlantic Council for an initial four-year term, which can be extended.

Mark Rutte

- The Secretary General is NATO's top international civil servant and has three principal roles.
 - Chair of all major committees, responsible for steering discussions, facilitating the decision-making process and ensuring that decisions are implemented.
 - Principal spokesperson for the Organization.
 - Head of the International Staff, whose role it is to support the Secretary General directly and indirectly.

Mark Rutte

- The person is nominated by member governments for an initial period of four years, which can be extended by mutual consent.
- The post is currently held by Mark Rutte, the former Dutch Prime Minister, who took up his responsibilities on 1 October 2024.



NATO Exercises

Steadfast Defender

- Steadfast Defender is a major NATO exercise series, designed to test the Alliance's ability to respond under Article 5 type scenarios.
- The 2024 edition involved some **90,000 troops**, over 1,100 combat vehicles, and numerous air and maritime platforms across Europe.
- Purpose: To practice reinforcement, interoperability, large-scale mobilization, and rapid deployment – emphasising the eastern flank of NATO and a high-intensity warfare scenario.

Baana Exercise

- In 2025, Finland led a training exercise (Baana) in which NATO/allied aircraft practiced landings and operations from a highway (E75) — an example of agile combat employment and dispersed operations.
- Significance: Demonstrates how NATO (and members) are adapting to potential high-intensity war environments and contested environments, especially against a Russia-threat scenario.

Eastern Sentry

- Launched in September 2025 in response to a security incident (drones incursion) on NATO's eastern flank.
- The operation is aimed at bolstering NATO's air, sea and ground posture along vulnerable borders (e.g., Poland) to enhance deterrence and rapid response.
- Importance: Illustrates a shift from purely scheduled exercises to **reactive deployments** and real-time operations.

3. Eurozone

- **Croatia** became the **20th Eurozone member** – officially adopted the euro on **1 January 2023**.
- Not all **European Union (EU)** countries are in the Eurozone.
 - Example: **Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Hungary**, etc., are in the EU but **do not use the euro** yet.
- **Eurozone = Euro users**, not just EU members.

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Ireland
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Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta
Netherlands
Portugal
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain

Note

- Bulgaria, the poorest member of the European Union (EU), became the 21st member of the eurozone on Thursday (January 1), bringing it closer to full European integration.

Note

- This comes amidst marked political instability and widespread domestic opposition, especially by pro-Russian parties.
- Bulgaria is retiring the lev, its currency since 1881, which, has been pegged to the Deutschmark and later the euro since 1997.

What is Eurozone?

The Maastricht Treaty of 1992, which established the European Union, paved the way for:

- The formation of a common economic and monetary union, which is the European Economic and Monetary Union
- The adoption of a common currency, which would be accepted as the sole legal tender, the euro.
- A unified central banking system, which established the European Central Bank (ECB).
- A common economic region.

What is Eurozone?

- The eurozone, or officially the euro area, refers to the geographic and economic region comprising those members of the EU that have fully adopted the euro as their official currency.

What is Eurozone?

- Bulgaria's admission to the eurozone makes it the 21st nation out of 27 EU members to do so.
- The remaining six use their own currencies instead.

What is Eurozone?

- Four microstates, Andorra, Monaco, the Vatican City and San Marino, also use the euro through agreements with the EU, while Kosovo and Montenegro use the euro as their sole currency without an agreement.
- However, none of these countries are not regarded as members of the eurozone.

Why do Countries Join Eurozone?

- As the common currency, the euro allows consumers in its member nations to compare prices with other members, boosting competitiveness.
- The euro also improves the ease of transactions and offers easier access to the markets of fellow member nations.

Why do Countries Join Eurozone?

- Members enjoy price stability within the region, as the ECB typically targets a 2% inflation rate.
- The unified monetary policy by the central bank ensures that members can benefit from lower interest rates.
- As a member, Bulgaria will also get a seat on the ECB's Governing Council, which sets rates for the eurozone.

Why do Countries Join Eurozone?

- Membership in the eurozone also eliminates currency exchange costs within the region, and members are insulated from external shocks owing to the sheer size of the eurozone economy.
- They also enjoy the benefits of a free trade area, which allows the free flow of labour, goods and services, and capital.

Why do Countries Join Eurozone?

- All EU member states – barring Denmark, which has availed an opt-out – are required to join the eurozone, and satisfy certain “convergence criteria”, which ensure that the aspiring member converges with the other members in economic and legal terms.

4. UNESCO

- UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- It seeks to build peace through international cooperation in Education, the Sciences and Culture.
- UNESCO's Constitution was adopted in London in 1945, it entered into force in 1946.

UNESCO

- After two World Wars in less than thirty years, UNESCO was born of a clear vision: **To achieve lasting peace, economic and political agreements among States are not enough.**
- We must bring people together and strengthen the intellectual and moral solidarity of humankind, through mutual understanding and dialogue between cultures.

UNESCO- Objectives

- Attaining quality education for all and lifelong learning
- Mobilizing science knowledge and policy for sustainable development
- Addressing emerging social and ethical challenges
- Fostering cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace
- Building inclusive knowledge societies through information and communication

UNESCO- Objectives

- **UNESCO has 195 Members and 8 Associate Members and is governed by the General Conference and the Executive Board.**
- The Secretariat, headed by the Director-General, implements the decisions of these two bodies.
- The Organization has more than 50 field offices around the world and its headquarters are located in Paris.

UNESCO- Objectives

- It is also a member of United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG).
- 3 UNESCO member states are not UN members: **Cook Islands, Niue, and Palestine.**
- 2 UN member states are not UNESCO members: **Israel and Liechtenstein.**

Publications by UNESCO



Publications By UNESCO



International Decade of Science for Sustainable Development (2024-2033)

- In December 2024, UNESCO launched the International Decade of Science for Sustainable Development, aiming to harness scientific knowledge to address global challenges and advance sustainable development.
- This initiative seeks to bridge the gap between science and society, promoting public engagement and trust in scientific endeavors.

International Year of Quantum Science and Technology 2025

- The United Nations has declared 2025 as the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology, with UNESCO playing a pivotal role in its implementation.
- This observance aims to raise awareness about the contributions of quantum science and its applications, marking a century since the development of quantum mechanics.

5. UNDP

- **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** is the development arm of the United Nations, established in 1965, which works to reduce poverty, promote sustainable development, strengthen governance, and help countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UNDP

- Headquarters: **New York, United States**
- Works in **170+ countries and territories**
- Focuses on **long-term development rather than emergency humanitarian relief**

Key Goals Include

- **Poverty reduction** – improving livelihoods and employment opportunities
- **Democratic governance** – supporting elections, institutions, and rule of law
- **Climate action & sustainability** – renewable energy, environmental protection
- **Disaster resilience** – rebuilding after disasters and improving preparedness
- **Gender equality** – empowering women and improving access to education and jobs

Key Areas of Work

Sustainable Development

- UNDP helps countries achieve the **Sustainable Development Goals**, such as ending poverty, improving education, and tackling climate change.

Climate and Environment

- Supports **renewable energy projects**
- Helps countries adapt to climate change
- Works on biodiversity conservation

Key Areas of Work

Governance and Peacebuilding

- Supports **free and fair elections**
- Strengthens public institutions
- Promotes anti-corruption measures

Crisis Recovery

- UNDP assists countries in **rebuilding infrastructure, restoring livelihoods, and strengthening institutions after conflict or disasters.**

Key Areas of Work

- UNDP publishes the famous **Human Development Report**, which includes the **Human Development Index (HDI)**.
- The **Human Development Index** measures development using:
 - Life expectancy
 - Education levels
 - Gross National Income per capita
- Countries are ranked based on their **overall human development level**.

Funding

- UNDP is funded through:
 - Contributions from **UN member states**
 - **International financial institutions**
 - Partnerships with **private sector and NGOs**
- Major donors include the **United States, European Union countries, Japan, and Germany.**

UNDP and the Private Sector

- UNDP's partnership with the private sector is built on creating an enabling environment where business can contribute meaningfully to sustainable development.
- We work with companies to promote inclusive practices that put people and the planet on par with profits, demonstrating that responsible business drives both social impact and long-term profitability.

UNDP and the Private Sector

- Our efforts help make markets work for the Sustainable Development Goals by supporting national governments in aligning private investment with development priorities while assisting businesses in embedding sustainability directly into their core operations.

UNDP and the Private Sector

- Through initiatives like our [SDG Finance platform](#), the [Istanbul International Centre for Private Sector in Development](#), and the [Business Call to Action](#), we provide practical tools, knowledge, and networks that enable companies to scale their impact.
- These partnerships create a virtuous cycle where business growth contributes to sustainable development outcomes, while sustainable practices enhance corporate resilience and competitiveness in an increasingly conscious

6. UNRWA

- UNRWA stands for UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East.
- It was founded in 1949 to provide aid to about 700,000 Palestinians who were forced to leave their homes in what is now Israel during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

UNRWA

- **The agency also highlighted that two million Palestinians in Gaza are dependent** on UNRWA services that would be scaled back as soon as February if the funding is not restored.
- The US and eight other Western countries, which together provided more than half of UNRWA's 2022 budget, **cut the money after Israel** accused some of the agency's staff members of involvement in the October 7 attack.

UNRWA

- The UN agency operates in Gaza and the Israeli-occupied West Bank, as well as Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan – countries where the refugees took shelter after their expulsion.
- According to UNRWA's website, it **runs education, health, relief and social services, microfinance and emergency assistance programmes** inside and outside refugee camps based in the aforementioned areas.



UNRWA

- **UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions by donor states like the US.**
- It also gets a limited subsidy from the UN, which is used only for administrative costs.

UNRWA

- Israel has alleged that 12 staff members of UNRWA were involved in the October 7 attack.
- It has also claimed that Hamas siphons off funds given to UNRWA and fights from in and around the agency's facilities.
- **Israel has alleged that " Hamas tunnels (are) running next to or under UNRWA facilities and accuses the agency of teaching hatred of Israel in its schools**

UNRWA

- UNRWA is crucial for the survival of people living in Gaza, which has plunged into a humanitarian crisis after the outbreak of the conflict.
- The agency has been the main supplier of food, water and shelter to civilians of the enclave.
- UNRWA, however, would run out of money needed for its aid work within weeks if the funding isn't restored

UNRWA

- UNRWA is funded almost entirely through voluntary contributions from UN member states and international donors, not through mandatory UN dues.
- Around 95% of UNRWA's budget comes from voluntary contributions by countries.
- Only about 5% comes from the United Nations regular budget, mainly to cover administrative costs such as international staff salaries.

UNRWA

- The largest contributors generally include:

Western Countries

- European Union (EU) and EU member states
- Germany
- United Kingdom
- France
- Sweden
- Netherlands

UNRWA

Middle Eastern / Gulf Countries

- Saudi Arabia
- Qatar
- United Arab Emirates
- Turkey
- Asia-Pacific
- Japan

UNRWA

- UNRWA uses the funds to provide services to **about 5.9 million Palestinian refugees** in:
- Gaza
- West Bank
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Syria

The funding supports:

- Schools and education
- Healthcare clinics
- Food aid
- Emergency humanitarian relief

7. UNHCR

- **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** is the United Nations agency responsible for protecting refugees, displaced people, and stateless persons worldwide.
- **Established: 1950**
- **Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland**
- **Works in 130+ countries**
- **Known as the UN Refugee Agency**
- Originally it was created to help **millions of Europeans displaced after World War II**, but today it deals with **global refugee crises**.

Main Objective

- The core mission of UNHCR is:
- **To protect the rights and well-being of refugees and ensure they receive international protection and assistance.**
- This includes:
 - Ensuring refugees are **not forcibly returned to danger** (principle of **non-refoulement**)
 - **Providing shelter, food, healthcare, and legal protection**
 - **Helping refugees find long-term solutions**

Who Does UNHCR Help?

- **Refugees**
- People forced to flee their country due to **war, persecution, violence, or human rights violations.**
- Example: Syrian refugees.

- **Asylum Seekers**
- People who have applied for refugee status but whose claims are **still being processed.**

Who Does UNHCR Help?

- **Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)**
- People forced to leave their homes but **still within their own country.**
- Example: People displaced in **Sudan or Ukraine.**

- **Stateless Persons**
- People who **do not have citizenship of any country.**
- UNHCR works to reduce statelessness globally.

Legal Framework

- UNHCR operates based on international refugee law, mainly:
- **1951 Refugee Convention-** Defines who is a refugee and their rights.
- **1967 Protocol-** Expanded the scope of the convention globally.

Funding

- UNHCR is funded mainly through **voluntary contributions** from:
 - governments
 - international organizations
 - private donors
 - NGOs
- Major donors include the **USA, Germany, EU, Japan, and the UK.**

UNHCR in India

- India is **not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention**, but UNHCR still operates in the country.

UNHCR works with refugees from:

- Afghanistan
- Myanmar (Rohingya)
- Sri Lanka
- Tibet





UNHCR provides:

- refugee documentation
- legal assistance
- education and livelihood support




8. BRICS

- *First BRICS summit was held in 2009 in Russia*, second statement is correct.
- BRICS is the acronym for an association of five major emerging national economies:
- Brazil Russia India China and South Africa.
- The grouping was originally known as “BRIC” before the inclusion of South Africa in 2010.
- The BRIC *first formal summit held in Yekaterinburg* commenced on 16 June 2009.









Country	Population (in Thousands) (2018) ^{[56][57]}	Nom. GDP bil. USD (2022 est.) ^[58]	PPP GDP bil. USD (2022 est.) ^[58]	Nom. GDP per capita USD (2022 est.) ^[58]	PPP GDP per capita USD (2020 est.) ^[58]	GDP growth (2018 est.) ^[59]	Foreign Exchange Reserves (2021) ^[60]
 Brazil	▲ 210,869.000	1,363	4,593	6,450	17,016	▲ 1.0%	\$355,620 million
 Russia	▲ 143,964.709	1,464	4,519	9,972	30,820	▲ 1.6%	\$600,900 million
 India	▲ 1,367,089.879	3,440	14,363	2,505	9,027	▲ 7.1%	\$633,894 million
 China	▲ 1,415,045.928	14,860	29,471	10,873	20,984	▲ 6.7%	\$3,198,200 million
 South Africa	▲ 57,398.421	370	834	6,193	13,965	▲ 1.4%	\$53,760 million
Average	▲ 627,060.914	3,753.7	8,119.9	7,922	19,041	▲ 3.5%	\$986,994 million

Sr. No.	Date(s)	Host country	Host leader	Location	Notes
1st	16 June 2009	 Russia	Dmitry Medvedev	Yekaterinburg (Sevastianov's House)	The summit was to discuss the global recession taking place at the time, future cooperation among states, and trade. Some of the specific topics discussed were food, trade, climate trade, and security for the nations. They called out for a more influential voice and representation for up and coming markets. Note at the time South Africa was not yet admitted to the BRICS organization at the time. ^[43]
2nd	15 April 2010	 Brazil	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva	Brasilia (Itamaraty Palace)	Guests: Jacob Zuma (President of South Africa) and Riyad al-Maliki (Foreign Minister of the Palestinian National Authority). The second summit continued on the conversation of the global recession and how to recover. They had a conversation on the IMF, climate change, and more ways to form cooperation among states. ^[43]
3rd	14 April 2011	 China	Hu Jintao	Sanya (Sheraton Sanya Resort)	First summit to include South Africa alongside the original BRIC countries. The third summit had nations debating on the global and internal economies of countries. ^[43]

4th	29 March 2012	 India	Manmohan Singh	New Delhi (Taj Mahal Hotel)	The BRICS Cable announced an optical fibre submarine communications cable system that carries telecommunications between the BRICS countries. The fourth summit discussed how the organization could prosper from the global recession and how they could take advantage of that to help their economies. BRICS had the intention of improving their global power and to provide adequate development for their state. ^[44]
5th	26–27 March 2013	 South Africa	Jacob Zuma	Durban (Durban ICC)	The fifth summit discusses the New Development Bank proposition and Contingent Reserve Agreement. BRICS also announced the Business Council and its Think Tank Council. ^[44]
6th	14–17 July 2014	 Brazil	Dilma Rousseff	Fortaleza (Centro de Eventos do Ceará) ^[45]	BRICS New Development Bank and BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement agreements signed. Guest: Leaders of Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) ^{[46][47]} The members of BRICS conversed with each other about political coordination, development, and economic growth. They established the Fortaleza Declaration and Action Plan. ^[48]

7th	8–9 July 2015	 Russia	Vladimir Putin	Ufa (Congress Hall) ^[49]	Joint summit with SCO-EAEU. The seventh summit discussed global, economic problems, and better ways to foster cooperation among member states. ^[48]
8th	15–16 October 2016	 India	Narendra Modi	Benaulim (Taj Exotica)	Joint summit with BIMSTEC. The eighth BRICS summit debated on topics like counter-terrorism, economies, and climate change. BRICS also issued the Goa Declaration and Action Plan, hoping to harden their relationships. ^[50]
9th	3–5 September 2017	 China	Xi Jinping	Xiamen (Xiamen International Conference Center)	Joint summit with EMDCD. The ninth summit was an event that talked about a bright future for BRICS and what their goals intend to be. They still covered and debated on international and regional issues with one another; hopeful to keep moving forward. ^[50]
10th	25–27 July 2018	 South Africa	Cyril Ramaphosa	Johannesburg (Sandton Convention Centre)	The tenth summit had the members discuss their rising industries. Hoping they can cut a bigger slice of the industry market.

11th	13–14 November 2019	 Brazil	Jair Bolsonaro	Brasilia (Itamaraty Palace) ^[55]	The eleventh summit discussed advancements in the BRICS's science and innovation fields. Primarily trying to advance technology and digital currency. They made mutual agreements to help stop drug trafficking and organized crime; both internationally and internally
12th	21–23 July 2020 (postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic) ^[63] 17 November 2020 (video conference) ^[64]	 Russia	Vladimir Putin	Saint Petersburg ^[65]	Joint summit with SCO. Discussing a mutual agreement on helping BRICS member countries to help foster better living standards and quality of life for each country's people. Plans on focusing on peace, economies, and cultural societal issues. ^[66]
13th	9 September 2021 (video conference)	 India	Narendra Modi	New Delhi	BRICS Games 2021 ^[67]

14th	23 June 2022 (video conference)	 China	Xi Jinping	Beijing	<p>A major development on the summit was creation of a new, basket type reserve currency. The currency, which is challenging US dollar, combines BRICS currencies and is backed by precious metals.</p>
15th	22–24 August 2023	 South Africa	Cyril Ramaphosa	Johannesburg (Sandton Convention Centre)	<p>Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates were invited to join the bloc. Full membership was scheduled to take effect on 1 January 2024.^{[47][48]} On December 29, 2023, the Government of Argentina sent a letter to all BRICS leaders officially declining the invitation to join the bloc.^[51] Saudi Arabia has not yet confirmed its acceptance.^[68]</p>
16th	October 2024	 Russia	TBD	Kazan	^[69]

About BRICS

- The BRICS is a group formed by eleven countries: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia, Indonesia, and Iran.
- It serves as a **political and diplomatic coordination forum** for countries from the Global South and for coordination in the most diverse areas.

About BRICS

- The objectives of BRICS include **strengthening economic, political, and social cooperation** among its members, as well as increasing the **influence of Global South countries** in international governance.
- The group seeks to improve the legitimacy, equity in participation, and efficiency of global institutions such as the UN, IMF, World Bank, and WTO.
- Moreover, it aims to **bolster sustainable** social and economic development and promote social inclusion.

History & Origin

- The acronym BRIC was conceived in 2001 by an economist from the Goldman Sachs investment bank in recognition of the dynamic economic growth of **Brasil, Russia, India, and China**.
- As a cooperation and concertation forum, the BRIC was **created by the political initiative** of the governments of its founding countries.

History & Origin

- Its initial goal was to engage in dialog about the major themes in the international agenda and politically strengthen their common stances in order to **democratize, legitimize, and balance the global order.**

History & Origin

- The first BRICS meeting occurred at the Ministers of Foreign Affairs level in 2006, at the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.
- The first meeting of the Summit of Heads of State was held in 2009 in the city of Ekaterinburg, Russia.

History & Origin

- As of the 2008 financial crisis, the then four countries began to act in a concerted manner in the context of the G20, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank, presenting proposals to reform the international economic and financial governance to reflect the increased relative weight of emerging countries in the global economy.

History & Origin

- With the incorporation of South Africa in 2011, an “S” was added to the original acronym for the group’s first expansion.
- In 2023, **during the Johannesburg Summit**, the second expansion was defined, with the adhesion of six new members.
- Over the past years, the BRICS has remained an informal coordination mechanism, with the presidency rotating among its members.

History & Origin

- Its activities traditionally revolve around three pillars:
 - 1) politics and security
 - 2) economy and finance
 - 3) P2P ('people-to-people'), or civil society.

Partner Countries

- According to the mandate agreed upon through the Johannesburg Declaration, the leaders approved the creation of the **BRICS partner country category during the Kazan Summit in 2024.**
- The BRICS partner countries are- **Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Uganda, and Uzbekistan.**

Partner Countries

- In its capacity as pro tempore BRICS Chair, the Government of Brazil announces the formal admission of Vietnam as a partner country of the group.
- Vietnam becomes the tenth BRICS partner country.

Partner Countries

- With a population of almost 100 million and a dynamic economy deeply integrated into global value chains, Vietnam stands out as a relevant actor in Asia.
- The country shares with the BRICS members and partners a commitment to a more inclusive and representative international order.
- Its efforts in favour of South-South cooperation and sustainable development reinforce its convergence with the interests of the group.

How is Presidency of BRICS Decided?

- The BRICS presidency rotates according to the letters of its acronym.
- In 2025, the presidency is under Brasil's leadership.
- Up until the present moment, the country holding the BRICS Presidency follows the acronym order, its term beginning on January 1st and ending on December 31st each year.

How is Presidency of BRICS Decided?

- With the recent adhesion of new members, **a new rotation formula will be discussed.**
- The temporary presidencies define the priorities of the agenda and organize the group's annual summit.
- The Brazilian Presidency of the BRICS will focus on international governance reform and Global South cooperation.

What are the participation categories at the BRICS?

Members & Partners

- There are two participation categories at the BRICS: members and partners.
- The eleven members – Brasil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and the United Arab Emirates – participate in all meetings, where the decision-making process is based on consensus.

Members & Partners

- The discussion about the partner country modality resulted from the mandate established during the Johannesburg Declaration and its creation was announced at the Kazan Summit, in October 2024.
- Partners are generally invited to participate in the BRICS Chancellors and Leaders Summit; however, they can also be present in other meetings if there is consensus among the members.
- Throughout 2024, over 30 countries expressed interest in participating in the BRICS, either as members or partners.

Members & Partners

- Other modalities of participation in BRICS meetings include the "BRICS Outreach", launched by South Africa in 2013, and the "BRICS Plus", launched by China in 2017.
- "BRICS Outreach" is a meeting between BRICS member countries and those from the geographic region of the country currently holding the rotating presidency who have been invited to such meeting.

Members & Partners

- "BRICS Plus" is a meeting between BRICS member countries and invited countries that are not from the geographic region of the country currently holding the BRICS rotating presidency.

Inclusion of New Full Members

- **Indonesia:** On January 6, 2025, Indonesia officially became a full member of BRICS, marking the bloc's expansion into Southeast Asia. This addition underscores Indonesia's strategic importance and its robust economic growth.

Inclusion of Partner Countries

- In January 2025, BRICS introduced a new category of "partner countries," expanding its collaborative framework. The nations granted this status include:
 - **Belarus**
 - **Bolivia**
 - **Cuba**
 - **Kazakhstan**
 - **Malaysia**
 - **Nigeria**
 - **Thailand**
 - **Uganda**
 - **Uzbekistan**
- This initiative aims to strengthen economic and political ties with these countries, enhancing BRICS' global reach.

BRICS Theme – 2024

- The **16th BRICS Summit** was held in **Kazan, Russia** from **22-24 October 2024**.
- The official theme was: **“Strengthening Multilateralism for Fair Global Development and Security.”**
- This theme emphasised the need for a **stronger multilateral order, inclusive development, and collective security cooperation** among **emerging and developing economies**

BRICS Theme – 2025

- The 17th BRICS Summit was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 6-7 July 2025.
- The summit theme was: “**Strengthening Global South Cooperation for More Inclusive and Sustainable Governance.**”
- This theme reflects a broader push for **south-south cooperation, global governance reform, and a more equitable development agenda** across political, economic, social, and technological areas.

BRICS 2026- India

Theme & Priorities

Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability

India's BRICS Chairship is guided by the theme "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability", reflecting a people-centric and humanity-first approach articulated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister at the 2025 Rio Summit.

BRICS 2026- India



BRICS India 2026 Logo

The BRICS logo for India's Chairship beautifully blends tradition with modernity. The petals radiate the vibrant colors of all BRICS member countries, highlighting their collective strength and unity.

At the centre, the graceful "Namaste" gesture captures India's timeless spirit of warmth, respect, and harmonious collaboration.

Complementing this visual identity are the three core pillars of BRICS—Political & Security cooperation, Economic & Financial partnership, and People-to-People exchanges—all subtly represented through the logo's message of inclusivity, dialogue, and shared growth. Together, the design reflects the broader BRICS vision of cooperation, sustainable development, and global harmony.

9. AI Action Summit 2025

- Co-chaired by France and India, the AI Action Summit convened 58 countries, including GPAI members such as France, Canada, Germany, and India.
- The summit resulted in the "Statement on Inclusive and Sustainable Artificial Intelligence for People and the Planet," emphasizing principles like accessibility, ethical development, and international cooperation.

AI Action Summit 2025

- The AI Action Summit was held at the **Grand Palais, Paris, France** on February 10–11, 2025. It was part of a broader **AI Action Week (February 6–11, 2025)** that included scientific conferences, cultural events, and business forums across Paris.
- The summit was **co-chaired by French President Emmanuel Macron and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi** – making India a prominent co-host on the global AI governance stage.
- It was the **third in a series of major international AI summits**, following:
 - AI Safety Summit – Bletchley Park, UK (November 2023)
 - AI Seoul Summit – South Korea (May 2024)

AI Action Summit 2025

- In the weeks leading up to the summit, the global AI landscape had shifted dramatically. Chinese AI startup **DeepSeek** had released a new model rivalling OpenAI's o1, triggering intense discussion about AI competition between the US and China. This sparked a broader race among nations to establish "national AI champions."
- Notably, the word "**Safety**" was dropped from the summit's name and replaced with "**Action**" – signalling a deliberate shift in tone from risk mitigation toward innovation, economic opportunity, and practical deployment of AI.
- US Vice President JD Vance captured this shift in his opening declaration: "I'm not here this morning to talk about AI safety. I'm here to talk about AI opportunity."

AI Action Summit 2025

- **A Statement on Inclusive and Sustainable Artificial Intelligence for People and the Planet** was the central diplomatic outcome of the summit.
- **~60 countries signed** the declaration, including France, China, India, Japan, Australia, and Canada.
- **The US and UK refused to sign.** The UK cited national security and global governance concerns, stating the declaration did not go far enough on clarity. The US under the Trump administration prioritised AI dominance over multilateral regulation. UK Science Minister Patrick Vallance stated: "If you over-regulate in fast-moving technologies you kill them."
- The declaration acknowledged existing international AI frameworks from the UN, UNESCO, African Union, OECD, Council of Europe, EU, G7, and G20.

Coalition for Environmentally Sustainable AI

- A major institutional outcome was the launch of the **Coalition for Environmentally Sustainable Artificial Intelligence (CESAI)** – a global partnership of **91 members** comprising:
- 37 tech companies (including Nvidia, IBM, SAP, Salesforce, AMD)
- 11 countries
- 5 international organizations (including UNDP and IEA)
- It was **spearheaded by France, UNEP (UN Environment Programme), and ITU (International Telecommunication Union)**.
- The Coalition's goal is to address the **environmental impact of AI development** – energy consumption, water use, carbon footprint of data centres – and bring sustainability considerations to the same level of importance as AI security and ethics in global discussions.

ROOST Initiative

- One of the summit's notable concrete announcements was **ROOST – Repository of Robust Open Online Safety Tools** – an initiative to develop free, open-source tools to detect and report **Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM)** online. It was supported by Google, Discord, OpenAI, and Roblox, and incubated at the Institute of Global Politics at Columbia University.

AI Impact Summit 2026

- The AI Impact Summit 2026 concluded with the adoption of the New Delhi Declaration on AI Impact, marking a significant milestone in global cooperation on artificial intelligence. The Declaration has been endorsed by 91 countries and international organisations, reflecting a broad-based global consensus on leveraging AI for economic growth and social good.
- The non-binding declaration is structured around the seven Chakras and represents the broadest multilateral consensus on AI to date.

AI Impact Summit 2026

- **Guiding Principles:** Guided by the principle of "Sarvajan Hitaya, Sarvajan Sukhaya" (Welfare for all, Happiness for all) and "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (the world is one family), the Declaration underscores that the benefits of AI must be equitably shared across humanity.

Key platforms announced under the Declaration

- **Charter for Democratic Diffusion of AI** – promotes affordable and equitable access to foundational AI resources for developing nations
- **Global AI Impact Commons** – a voluntary platform featuring 80+ impact stories across 30+ countries to share and scale successful AI use cases
- **Trusted AI Commons** – a repository of tools, benchmarks, and best practices for secure and reliable AI development
- **International Network of AI for Science Institutions** – a framework to accelerate AI-driven scientific research through global collaboration

PM Modi unveiled the MANAV framework for ethical AI governance based on five principles:

Letter	Principle
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M	Moral and Ethical Systems — establishing global ethical guardrails
A	Accountable Governance — verifiable transparency through algorithmic audits
N	National Sovereignty — data sovereignty, ensuring citizen data stays under national jurisdiction
A	Accessible and Inclusive — linguistic justice, supporting all 22 Indian official languages
V	Valid and Legitimate — watermarking AI content to ensure legal traceability

India Joining Pax Silica

- On the sidelines of the summit, India joined Pax Silica, a US-led technology alliance aimed at building secure semiconductor supply chains and advanced manufacturing networks among strategic allies to counter Chinese AI efforts.
- The group already includes Japan, South Korea, the UK, and Israel. India joined as the tenth member nation.

India Joining Pax Silica

- India also signed a Joint Statement on the India-US AI Opportunity Partnership as a bilateral addendum to the declaration, envisioning pro-innovation regulatory cooperation, enhanced access to advanced compute, joint R&D, and next-generation data centre collaboration.

Countries Chosen- Initially

- Japan: Advanced materials, chip tools, and memory technology
- South Korea: Global leaders in DRAM, NAND, and advanced fabs
- Netherlands: Home to ASML, the world's most important chip equipment firm
- Singapore: Semiconductor manufacturing and global logistics hub
- United Kingdom: Strong AI research and chip IP ecosystem
- Israel: AI chips, semiconductor R&D, and defense technology
- UAE: Capital, energy security, and AI infrastructure investment
- Australia: Key supplier of lithium and rare earth minerals

10. UNHRC

- **United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)** is an intergovernmental body of the United Nations responsible for promoting and protecting human rights worldwide.
- **Established: 2006**
- **Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland**
- **Replaced: UN Commission on Human Rights (1946–2006)**
- The Council was created because the earlier commission faced criticism for **politicisation and inefficiency**.

UNHRC

- The UNHRC consists of **47 member states**, elected by the **United Nations General Assembly**.

Membership Distribution

- Seats are distributed by geographic regions:
 - **Africa - 13 seats**
 - **Asia-Pacific - 13 seats**
 - **Latin America & Caribbean - 8 seats**
 - **Western Europe & Others - 7 seats**
 - **Eastern Europe - 6 seats**

UNHRC

Term

- Members serve **3-year terms**
- A country **cannot serve more than two consecutive terms**

UNHRC

- The primary goal of UNHRC is to **protect and promote human rights globally.**
- Key functions include:
 - Addressing **human rights violations**
 - Investigating abuses in specific countries
 - Promoting **human rights education and awareness**
 - Developing international human rights norms

Major Mechanisms of UNHRC

Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

- The **Universal Periodic Review** is the most important mechanism.
- It involves:
 - **Review of human rights records of all UN member states**
 - **Conducted every 4-5 years**
- Every country must report on its human rights situation.

Major Mechanisms of UNHRC

Special Procedures

- UNHRC appoints **independent experts**, known as:
 - **Special Rapporteurs**
 - **Independent Experts**
 - **Working Groups**

They investigate specific issues such as:

- **torture**
- **freedom of expression**
- **arbitrary detention**

Major Mechanisms of UNHRC

Commissions of Inquiry

- UNHRC can create **investigative bodies** to examine serious violations.

Examples:

- Syria war crimes investigations
- Myanmar Rohingya crisis investigations

Role of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

- The Council works closely with the **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)**.

The High Commissioner:

- promotes human rights globally
- reports violations to the UNHRC
- supports investigations and monitoring

Important Achievements

UNHRC has:

- Investigated **human rights abuses in conflict zones**
- Created global frameworks for **rights protection**
- Increased international pressure on governments violating rights
- Example: Investigations into the **Rohingya crisis in Myanmar.**

Criticism of UNHRC

- Despite its importance, UNHRC faces several criticisms:
- **Politicisation-** Countries sometimes use the Council for **political agendas**.
- **Membership Issues-** Some member states with **poor human rights records** become members.
- **Selective Focus-** Critics argue that the Council sometimes **targets specific countries disproportionately**.

11. IAEA

- The **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** is the world's central intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical cooperation in the nuclear field.
- Often referred to as the "**World's Nuclear Watchdog**," it works to promote the safe, secure, and peaceful use of nuclear technologies.

Origins and History

- The IAEA was born from the "**Atoms for Peace**" speech delivered by U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower to the UN General Assembly in 1953.
- **Established:** July 29, 1957.
- **Headquarters:** Vienna, Austria.
- **Status:** An autonomous organization. While it is not a direct department of the UN, it reports to both the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council.
- **Nobel Peace Prize:** Awarded the prize in 2005 for efforts to prevent nuclear energy from being used for military purposes.



The Three Pillars of the IAEA

- The Agency's work is generally organized into three main areas:
- **Pillar 1: Safety and Security** Developing standards for nuclear safety to protect people and the environment from radiation. This includes responding to emergencies and providing technical assistance to prevent nuclear terrorism.
- **Pillar 2: Science and Technology** Helping member states use nuclear techniques for peaceful purposes in medicine (cancer treatment), agriculture (pest control), and water management.
- **Pillar 3: Safeguards and Verification** Acting as an inspectorate to verify that nations are not diverting nuclear material from peaceful power plants to build nuclear weapons.

Key Functions and Roles

- The IAEA plays a critical role in global geopolitics and sustainable development:
- **Nuclear Non-Proliferation:** It is the verification mechanism for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Inspectors visit nuclear sites worldwide to count nuclear material and ensure nothing is diverted.
- **Technical Cooperation:** It assists developing countries in using nuclear science to meet Sustainable Development Goals, such as using radiation to breed drought-resistant crops.
- **Nuclear Power Support:** It provides expertise to countries looking to start or expand their nuclear power programs to reduce carbon emissions.

Organizational Structure

- The Agency is governed by two main policy-making bodies:
- **General Conference:** Consists of all 178 member states. It meets annually to approve the budget and program.
- **Board of Governors:** A smaller group (35 members) that meets more frequently to make executive decisions and approve safeguards agreements.
- **Secretariat:** The professional staff led by the Director General (currently Rafael Mariano Grossi).

Note

- The IAEA cannot "force" a country to stop a nuclear program; it acts as a reporter.
- If a country breaks its agreements, the IAEA notifies the UN Security Council, which then decides on sanctions or actions.

IAEA

- The IAEA released reports in early 2025 stating that **Iran's uranium enrichment levels had crossed previously agreed thresholds** under the 2015 nuclear deal framework.
- Concerns were raised over enrichment nearing weapons-grade levels.
- Inspectors reported reduced monitoring access at certain facilities.
- Western nations pushed for stronger verification mechanisms.

Russia-Ukraine War & Nuclear Safety Concerns

- The IAEA was actively involved in monitoring nuclear facilities in Ukraine, especially:
- The Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant – Europe's largest nuclear power plant.
- Continued shelling risks and power disruptions triggered IAEA emergency inspections.
- The agency warned about nuclear safety risks due to military presence near reactors.

Safeguards Agreement

- The nuclear reactors in India are placed under IAEA safeguards *only if they are fueled by uranium procured from abroad.*
- There are *at present 22 operational reactors*, of which *14 are under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards* as these use imported fuel.
- India currently imports uranium from Russia, Kazakhstan and Canada.
- Plans are also afoot to procure the fuel from Uzbekistan and Australia.

Safeguards Agreement

- By placing the *reactors under the IAEA safeguards*, India gives the international *nuclear energy watchdog access* to them.
- This step was taken by the country in 2014 to demonstrate that its *nuclear energy programmed was for peaceful purposes*.
- It was a necessary step under the Indo -US nuclear deal.

What Are Safeguards & What role they Play?

- Safeguards are *activities by which the IAEA can verify* that a State is *living up to its international commitments* not to use nuclear programmes for nuclear-weapons purposes.
- The global *Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)* and other treaties *against the spread of nuclear weapons* entrust the IAEA as the nuclear inspectorate.
- Today, the *IAEA safeguards nuclear material* and activities under agreements with more than 140 States.
- The IAEA's safeguards system *functions as a confidence-building measure.*

Safeguards Agreements

1. Comprehensive safeguards agreements with non-nuclear-weapon State parties to the NPT
2. Voluntary offer safeguards agreements with the nuclear-weapon State parties to the NPT.
3. **Item-specific safeguards agreements with non-NPT States.**

- The vast majority of safeguards agreements are comprehensive safeguards agreements that have been concluded by the IAEA with non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT and nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties.
- As of 31 December 2025, the IAEA has concluded comprehensive safeguards agreements with 183 States.
- Some 100 of these States have also concluded small quantities protocols to their comprehensive safeguards agreements.

- Under a comprehensive safeguards agreement, the IAEA has the right and obligation to ensure that safeguards are applied on all nuclear material in the territory, jurisdiction or control of the State for the exclusive purpose of verifying that such material is not diverted to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

- The five nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT have concluded voluntary offer safeguards agreements under which the IAEA applies safeguards to nuclear material in facilities that the State has voluntarily offered and the IAEA has selected for the application of safeguards.
- The IAEA applies safeguards under a voluntary offer agreement to verify that nuclear material remains in peaceful activities and is not withdrawn from safeguards except as provided for in the agreement.

- Safeguards are implemented in three States that are not party to the NPT – India, Pakistan and Israel – on the basis of item-specific agreements they have concluded with the IAEA.
- Under these agreements, the IAEA applies safeguards to ensure that nuclear material, facilities and other items specified under the safeguards agreement are not used for the manufacture of any nuclear weapon or to further any military purpose, and that such items are used exclusively for peaceful purposes and not for the manufacture of any nuclear explosive device.

What is Additional Protocol?

- The Additional Protocol is **not a stand-alone agreement**, but rather a **protocol to a safeguards agreement** that provides additional tools for verification.
- In particular, it **significantly increases the IAEA's** ability to verify the **peaceful use of all nuclear material** in States with comprehensive safeguards agreements.
- In May 1997, the IAEA Board of Governors approved the Model Additional Protocol.
- The Model Additional Protocol was **designed for all States** that have **concluded any of the three types of safeguards** agreements with the IAEA.

What is Additional Protocol?

- Under the Additional Protocol, the IAEA is granted expanded rights of access to information and locations in the States.
- For States with a CSA, the Additional Protocol aims to fill the gaps in the information reported under a CSA.
- By enabling the IAEA to obtain a much fuller picture of such States' nuclear programmes, plans, nuclear material holdings and trade, the Additional Protocol increases the IAEA's ability to provide much greater assurance on the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in those States.

12. USA Withdraws from WHO

- United States President Donald Trump signed an executive order to withdraw from the World Health Organisation (WHO) on his very first day in office.

Reasons for Withdrawal from WHO

1. Mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic
2. Failure to adopt urgently needed reforms
3. Inability to demonstrate independence from the inappropriate political influence of WHO member states.
4. Continued demand of “unfairly onerous payments from the United States.”

About WHO

- The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) responsible for international public health.
- Established on 7 April 1948, its headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland.

Highlights of Executive Order

- One, any transfer of US funds and resources to the WHO will be paused.
- Two, all US government personnel or contractors working in any capacity with the WHO will be recalled.
- Three, the United States will “identify credible and transparent United States and international partners to assume necessary activities previously undertaken by the WHO.”

Highlights of Executive Order

- Lastly, United States will cease negotiations towards the pandemic treaty the WHO is working on.
- The accord aims to better prepare countries to respond to pandemics, create a framework for global cooperation if a pandemic happens.

Financial Implications

- Withdrawal of the United States is likely to have a huge financial impact on the WHO, with the agency receiving around a fifth of its funds from the country.

Financial Implications

- This is one of the points of contention for President Trump, with the executive order stating:
- “China, with a population of 1.4 billion, has 300 percent of the population of the United States, yet contributes nearly 90 percent less to the WHO.”

WHO's Funding

- WHO's funding essentially comes in two ways – the mandatory assessed contributions from all its member countries, and the voluntary contributions raised from various countries and organisations.
- Over the years, the assessed contributions have remained stagnant and now cover less than 20% of the organisation's budget.

WHO's Funding

- In assessed contributions, the United States is the biggest payer, accounting for 22.5% of the contributions, followed by China at 15%.
- Of the total USD 578 million assessed contributions, the United States pays approximately USD 138 million and China USD 87.6 million.

WHO's Funding

- In voluntary contributions, while the US is still the biggest donor, accounting for around 13% (USD 356.3 million) of the total contributions in 2023, China accounted for only about 0.14% of the total contributions (USD 3.9 million).
- The second biggest voluntary contributor was the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Impact on India

- With WHO losing out on a significant proportion of its funding, its work across countries, including India, is likely to be affected.
- The WHO participates in and supports several health programmes of the Indian government, such as its work on neglected tropical diseases, HIV-malaria-and tuberculosis, anti-microbial resistance, among others.
- Importantly, it plays a significant role in the country's immunisation programme.

Can Member States Withdraw From WHO?

- **There is no provision for withdrawing in WHO's constitution.**
- The US Congress, however, at the time of joining the organisation in 1948, had laid down a condition that said the country could **withdraw after giving a one-year notice and meeting the financial obligations of the current year.**

13. Indus Water Treaty

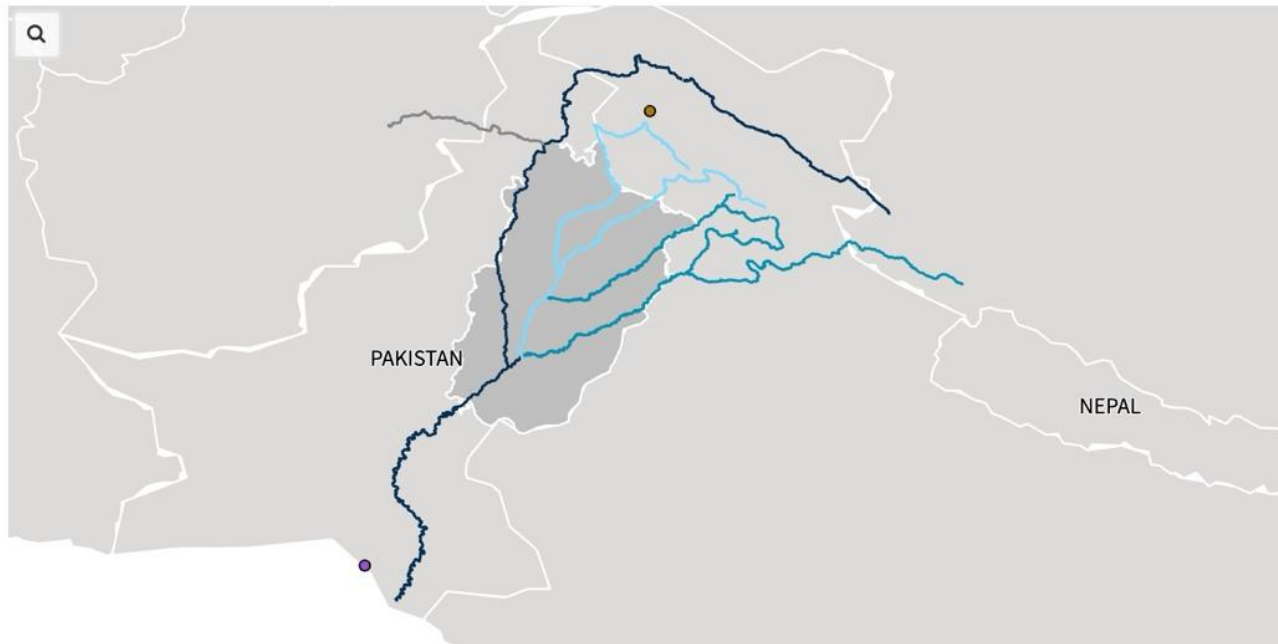
India has said the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) of 1960 with Pakistan will be held 'in abeyance' with immediate effect, until Islamabad credibly and irrevocably abjures its support for cross-border terrorism.

Indus Water Treaty

Indus river system

The **Indus river** has five tributaries - Chenab, Jhelum (**western rivers**) and Ravi, Beas and Sutlej (**eastern rivers**) Another tributary - **Kabul** - flows through Pakistan and Afghanistan.

- Punjab (Pakistan)
- Capital
- Reservoir



Source: OpenStreetMap


THE HINDU

Indus Water Treaty

- The Ravi, the Beas and the Sutlej are together called eastern rivers while the Chenab, the Jhelum and the Indus main are called as western rivers. Its waters are critical to both India and Pakistan.
- Although there is no explicit provision in the treaty for its abrogation, Article 62 of the Vienna Convention on Law of the Treaties provides sufficient room under which the treaty can be repudiated in view of the fundamental change of circumstances which has occurred with regard to those existing at the time of conclusion of the treaty.

Indus Water Treaty

Post Abeyance of IWT

- In the absence of the treaty, India is under no obligation to follow the restrictions on the “reservoir flushing” of the Kishanganga reservoir and other projects on western rivers in Jammu and Kashmir. The Indus Waters Treaty currently prohibits it.

Indus Water Treaty

Post Abeyance of IWT

- Flushing can help India desilt its reservoir but then filling the entire reservoir could take days. Under the treaty, reservoir filling after the flushing has to be done in August – peak monsoon period – but with the pact in abeyance, it could be done anytime.
- According to the treaty, there are design restrictions on building structures like dams on Indus and its tributaries. In the past, Pakistan has raised objections over the designs but in future it will not be obligatory to take the concerns onboard.

Indus Water Treaty

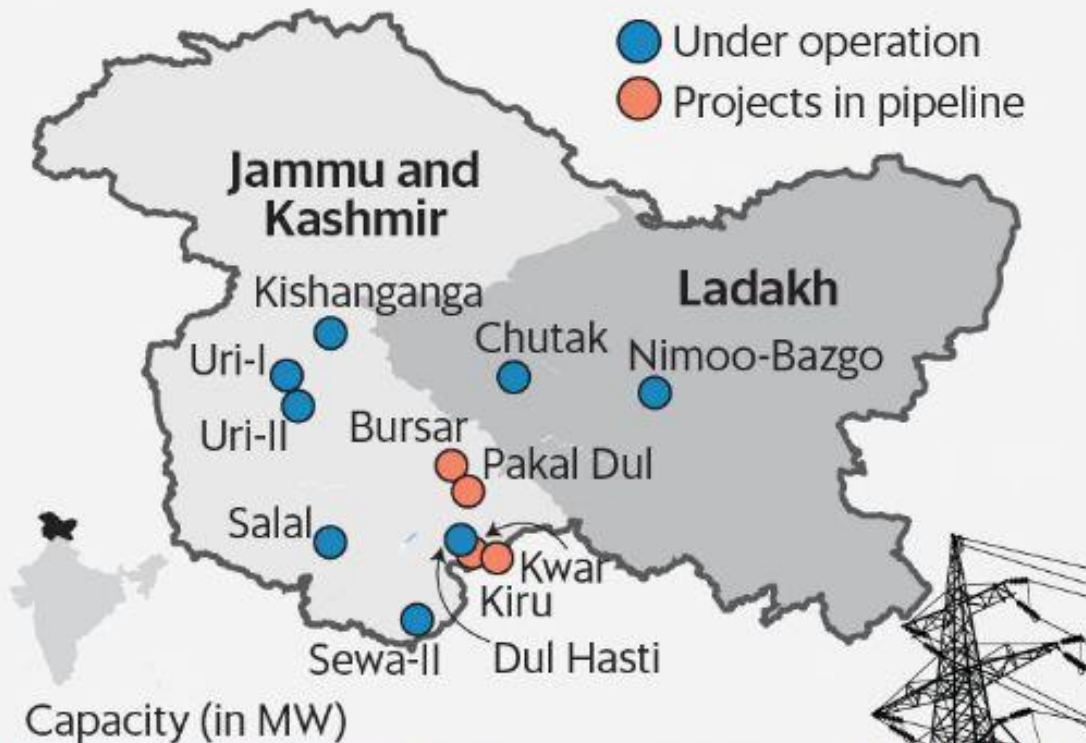
Post Abeyance of IWT

- In the past almost every project has been objected to by Pakistan.
- Notable are Salal, Baglihar, Uri, Chutak, Nimoo Bazgo, Kishenganga, Pakal Dul, Miyar, Lower Kalnai and Ratle.
- After the Pulwama terror attack in 2019, the government cleared eight more hydropower projects in Ladakh.
- The objections may no longer be applicable for the new projects.

Indus Water Treaty

Power play

NHPC has been present in J&K for around 40 years and has invested ₹20,778.38 cr. Going forward, the plan is to build hydropower projects totalling 3,814MW.



Indus Water Treaty

Post Abeyance of IWT

- There are also operational restrictions on how reservoirs are to be filled and operated. With the treaty in abeyance, these are no longer applicable.
- India can stop sharing flood data on the rivers. This could also prove detrimental to Pakistan, especially during the monsoon when rivers swell.

Indus Water Treaty

Post Abeyance of IWT

- India will now have no restriction on storage on western rivers, particularly the Jhelum, and the country can take a number of flood control measures to mitigate floods in the Valley.

Indus Water Treaty

Additional Facts on IWT

- At the time of Independence, the boundary line between the two newly created independent countries – Pakistan and India – was drawn right across the Indus Basin, leaving Pakistan as the lower riparian and India as the upper riparian.

Indus Water Treaty

Additional Facts on IWT

- A dispute thus arose between the two countries regarding the utilisation of irrigation water from existing facilities. Negotiations held under the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) culminated in the signing of the Indus Waters Treaty in 1960.

Indus Water Treaty

Additional Facts on IWT

- According to the treaty, all the waters of the eastern rivers – Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi with an average annual flow of around 33 million acre feet (MAF) is allocated to India for unrestricted use while the waters of western rivers – Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab with average annual flow of around 135 MAF is allocated largely to Pakistan.

Indus Water Treaty

Additional Facts on IWT

- However, India is permitted to use the waters of the western rivers for domestic use, non-consumptive use, agricultural and generation of hydro-electric power.
- The right to generate hydroelectricity from western rivers is unrestricted subject to conditions for the design and operation of the treaty. India can also create storages up to 3.6 MAF on western rivers, the pact states.

Indus Water Treaty

Exit Clause of IWT

- The Indus Waters Treaty lacks an exit clause, meaning neither India nor Pakistan can legally abrogate it unilaterally.
- The Treaty has no end date, and any modification requires the consent of both parties.
- But while the Treaty cannot be exited, it does contain a dispute resolution mechanism.

Indus Water Treaty

Exit Clause of IWT

- Since there is no provision in the IWT about its duration or suspension, there is no avenue that Pakistan can approach for 'revival' of the treaty.
- Nor can Pakistan approach the International Court of Justice seeking specific performance to implement the Treaty.

Indus Water Treaty

Exit Clause of IWT

- Because of the Indian reservation given under the ICJ statute that bars the filing of a case by Pakistan against India.
- In case India 'revokes' the treaty, it literally means it has shunned it.

Indus Water Treaty

Exit Clause of IWT

- The dispute resolution mechanism under Article IX and Annexes F and G of the IWT will be of no use and assistance to Pakistan.
- It is limited to a dispute under the treaty and not meant to provide for specific performance of the treaty itself.

Consequences

- **Dispute mechanisms exist only within the treaty framework.**

If treaty obligations are suspended, these mechanisms lose legal force.

- **India is no longer obligated to accept Neutral Expert or Arbitration proceedings.**
- **Pakistan cannot compel India to participate in arbitration without India's consent.**
- **The World Bank's facilitation role becomes ineffective if one party withdraws cooperation.**

Without Annex F and G mechanisms:

- Pakistan loses **institutional dispute resolution options** under the treaty.
- India gains **greater freedom in designing hydroelectric projects** on western rivers.
- Pakistan may have to rely on **diplomatic pressure or international forums instead of treaty mechanisms**.

14. UNFCCC

- The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an international treaty that aims to prevent “dangerous” human interference with the climate system and serves as a foundational framework for future global efforts to mitigate climate change and adapt to its inevitable impacts.

UNFCCC

- The treaty, which entered into force in 1994, provides a foundation for global efforts to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at levels that allow ecosystems to adapt naturally, ensure food security, and support sustainable economic development.

UNFCCC

- With 198 ratified parties, the UNFCCC has near-universal membership, making it one of the most inclusive international agreements ever created.
- In January 2026, the US announced its withdrawal from the treaty, becoming the first country to do so.

UNFCCC

- Its primary objective is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that prevents dangerous interference with the climate systems, stating that “such a level should be achieved within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened, and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.”

UNFCCC

- While the UNFCCC itself does not mandate specific emissions reduction targets, it serves as a framework for future climate agreements.
- The treaty has facilitated key milestones such as the 1997 [Kyoto Protocol](#) and the 2015 Paris Agreement, which have defined global climate action and established mechanisms for emissions reduction and climate change adaptation.

CBDR

- A fundamental principle of the UNFCCC is the recognition of common but differentiated responsibility.
- It acknowledges that while all countries share responsibility for addressing climate change, industrialized countries are historically major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions and therefore bear greater burden in combating this global issue.

CBDR

- Furthermore, the UNFCCC acknowledges the pressing need for economic development in the world's poorer countries and accepts that the share of planet-warming gases produced by developing countries will grow.
- The convention also advocates for the provision of financial and technological support to developing countries for action on climate change.

Data Gathering

- The UNFCCC establishes mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on countries' progress towards their climate commitments, ensuring transparency and accountability in reaching the shared goal.

Data Gathering

- Industrialized countries are required to report regularly on their climate change policies and measures and submit an annual inventory of their emissions.
- Developing countries report in more general terms on their actions to address climate change and adapt to its impacts.
- They are required to report less regularly than industrialized countries and their reporting is dependent on availability of funding for the preparation of the reports.

COP

- Central to the UNFCCC is the annual Conferences of Parties (COP), the decision-making body of the convention.
- Its purpose is to review and advance the implementation of the convention.
- Countries who have joined the UNFCCC meet to measure progress and negotiate multilateral responses to climate change.

COP

- COPs have created global milestones for the climate movement, setting standards and advancing action.
- The COP brings together not only the government but also the private sector and thousands of representatives from the civil society, green and polluting industries, and non-governmental organisations to tackle the climate crisis.

COP

- The first universal, legally binding international climate agreement was achieved at COP21, marking a historic moment in global climate action.
- The Paris Agreement mobilized parties in taking action to decrease greenhouse gas emissions with an agreed-upon goal of staying below a global average temperature increase of 2C above pre-industrial levels but encouraging parties to strive to keep it below 1.5C.

COP

- In an unprecedented move, COP28 in Dubai recognized the need to transition away from fossil fuels for the first time, after unprecedented pressure from the scientific community and the UN, which repeatedly said that limiting global heating to 1.5C is impossible without the phase out of all fossil fuels.
- In line with the framework, the final agreement acknowledged common but differentiated responsibility, with emphasis on phasing out fossil fuels with justice and equity.

COP

- The most recent summit, [COP30](#), held in November 2025 in Belém, Brazil, marked a significant yet contentious chapter in climate diplomacy.
- Known as the “COP of Truth,” COP30 sought to address key issues such as climate finance, deforestation, fossil fuel dependency, and Indigenous rights.
- However, the outcomes of the conference were a mixed bag of progress and disappointment. Notably, the final agreement [did not mention fossil fuels](#).

COP

- While developed nations have repeatedly pledged financial support to assist vulnerable countries, the actual delivery of funds has fallen short.
- The Loss and Damage Fund, [established at COP27](#) and designed to help countries recover from climate impacts, remains underfunded, with wealthy nations reluctant to accept financial and legal liability for climate-induced damages.

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